



MUS LONGIPILIS, Gould.

Gould and H.C. Richter del. et lith.

Hillmeadow & Walton, Imp.

MUS LONGIPILIS, *Gould.*

Long-haired Rat.

I AM indebted to the Directors of the Australian Museum at Sydney for permission to figure this remarkable species of Rat, and for the loan of the unique specimen from which my drawing was taken. In size it approximates very closely to the Common Rat of Europe (*Mus Rattus*), but is at once distinguished from that species by the light buffy hue of its fur, and by the great length of the numerous black hairs interspersed along the back, which latter feature has suggested the specific name of *longipilis*.

In the brief notes kindly transmitted to me by Mr. William Sheridan Wall, that gentleman informs me that it was killed by his late brother, Mr. Thomas Wall, during his expedition to the Victoria River, on a desert which abounded with these animals. "In the absence of vegetation, it was interesting to ascertain, if possible, their means of existence. The stomachs of several were examined with this view, and all were found to contain a fleshy mass, leading to the supposition that they preyed upon each other, for no other animal was found to inhabit the locality." This mode of feeding was doubtless only temporary, probably caused by the entire absence, at the time, of the seeds and other vegetable substances suitable to its economy. It is to be regretted that more examples of this new species were not procured, especially as the one I have figured must be returned to the Australian Museum; examples of so curious a Rat would be very desirable accessions to our national and other collections.

Fur very long, hairy and somewhat harsh to the touch, of a greyish brown at the base, and tawny buff on the surface, numerous interspersed, especially along the back, with very long, fine, black hairs; under surface of the body buffy grey; feet flesh-colour, sparingly clothed with silvery white hairs; tail thinly beset with fine, stiff, black hairs, between which the usual scaly appearance is perceptible.

Total length, from the tip of the nose to the end of the tail, $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches; of the tail, $5\frac{3}{4}$; of the nose to the ear, $1\frac{5}{8}$; of the ear, $\frac{3}{4}$; of the tarsi, $1\frac{5}{16}$ inch.

The figures are of the natural size.